

(Washington, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today voted to temporarily release 70 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to lower gas prices. President Bush, President Clinton, and the first President Bush each tapped or suspended shipments to the SPR, resulting in a 33 percent drop in oil prices in 1991; a 19 percent drop in 2000; and a 9 percent drop in 2005. The Consumer Energy Supply Act (HR 6578) failed to gain the two-thirds majority it needed to pass today by a vote of 268-157.

“I want to lower gas prices for American families. That is why I voted to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is one way that we can quickly drive down prices,” Altmire said. “Although this bill did not pass today, I am going to keep pushing for solutions that will deliver real relief to Pennsylvania families and businesses.”

With the SPR currently 97 percent full with more than 700 million barrels of oil -- its highest level ever -- 70 million barrels of oil could easily be released. Additionally, the oil that would be released from the SPR will later be replaced with heavier, cheaper crude oil, which will make the SPR a more valuable resource. The SPR currently does not have any heavy crude oil, even though that is the only type of oil that can be processed by 11 refineries on the Gulf Coast. Placing heavy crude oil in the SPR would ensure that it has necessary resources to provide oil to these 11 refineries should oil imports stop.

To help solve America's energy crisis, Congressman Altmire also supports increasing domestic drilling and reigning in oil speculators who artificially inflate prices. Congressman Altmire is also pushing for the construction of new nuclear reactors and additional funding for clean coal technologies, such as carbon capture and sequestration, to make America more energy independent and boost western Pennsylvania's economy.

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